

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 00792 030010Z

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SUBJ: IVORY COAST - NIGERIAN RELATIONS

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF FEBRUARY 25 LETTER FROM
IVORY COAST PERM REP TO SECRETARY GENERAL WHICH, AT
IVORY COAST REQUEST, HAS BEEN CIRCULATED TO MISSIONS
OF MEMBER STATES:

QUOTE:

TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH

REPUBLIC OF THE IVORY COAST
UNION - DISCIPLINE - WORK

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE IVORY COAST

NEW YORK, 25 FEBRUARY 1976

SA/NS/MNU/76-139

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PAGE 02 USUN N 00792 030010Z

SIR,

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO INFORM YOU THAT FOLLOWING THE RECENT ATTEMPTED COUP D'ETAT IN NIGERIA, DURING WHICH THE NIGERIAN HEAD OF STATE, GENERAL MURTALA MOHAMED, WAS KILLED, THE NIGERIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES TOOK THE LIBERTY OF HAVING THE CHANCELLERY AND THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR OF THE IVORY COAST IN LAGOS SURROUNDED, INVADED AND SEARCHED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM ON 18 FEBRUARY 1976, WITH A VIEW TO SEEKING THE PERPETRATOR OF THE ABORTIVE COUP D'ETAT.

THIS ACT WAS COMMITTED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR OF THE IVORY COAST IN LAGOS, AND WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE IVORY COAST; THE NIGERIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES DID NOT EVEN TAKE THE PRIOR PRECAUTION OF APPROACHING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IVORY COAST IN ABIDJAN, TO WHICH A NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IS NEVERTHELESS ACCREDITED.

THIS ACT, WHICH FLAGRANTLY VIOLATES THE VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, HAS GIVEN RISE TO GREAT INDIGNATION IN THE IVORY COAST AND TO A VEHEMENT PROTEST BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THAT COUNTRY IN THE FOLLOWING COMMUNIQUE, ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

"DURING THE AFTERNOON OF 18 FEBRUARY 1976, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR OF THE IVORY COAST IN LAGOS, THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I., MR. MEITE, WAS SUMMONED TO THE NIGERIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND RECEIVED BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR AFRICA, WHO TOLD HIM THAT, ON THE PRETEXT THAT A LIEUTENANT-COLONEL DINKA HAD ALLEGEDLY TAKEN REFUGE IN AN EMBASSY, THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES HAD DECIDED TO SEARCH THE PREMISES OF THE MISSION OF THE IVORY COAST IN LAGOS.

"DESPITE THE FORCEFUL PROTESTATION OF OUR CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, AND EVEN BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO REGAIN THE EMBASSY, IT WAS SURROUNDED AND THEN INVADED BY A LARGE DETACHMENT OF ARMED REGULAR SOLDIERS, AND THE PREMISES OF THE CHANCELLERY AND THE RESIDENCE WERE SEARCHED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM.

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PAGE 03 USUN N 00792 030010Z

"THE GOVERNMENT OF THE IVORY COAST WISHES TO STRESS THAT A MODICUM OF SIMPLE COMMON SENSE WOULD HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE TO REALIZE THAT AN AFRICAN EMBASSY, AND IN PARTICULAR THE EMBASSY OF THE IVORY COAST, WAS THE LAST PLACE IN WHICH THE FLEEING COLONEL WOULD THINK OF SEEKING REFUGE.

"THE IVORY COAST HAS ALWAYS CONDEMNED POLITICAL

ASSASSINATION AS A MEANS OF OBTAINING POWER.

"IN VIEW OF THE SERIOUS INCIDENTS OF WHICH IT WAS
THE VICTIM IN LAGOS, THE IVORY COAST PROTESTS VEHEMENTLY
AND VIGOROUSLY AND CONSIDERS THAT THE FACT THAT A
COUNTRY HAS A LARGE POPULATION AND RECEIVES OIL
ROYALTIES DOES NOT EMPOWER IT TO IGNORE THE CUSTOMS
AND BASIC RULES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

"IT EXPECTS NIGERIA TO PROVIDE AN EXPLANATION OF THIS
UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE, WHICH CERTAINLY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE
THE BEST MEANS OF PROMOTING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN
NEIGHBOURING AFRICAN STATES, IN ORDER THAT IT MAY DERIVE
ENLIGHTENMENT THEREFROM."

I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD HAVE THIS LETTER CIR-
CULATED TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER STATES AS AN
OFFICIAL UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENT.

ACCEPT, SIR, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION.

(SIGNED) SIMEON AKE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE.

UNQUOTE.
BENNETT

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